

Final Amendment 10
to the Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery Management Plan
with a
Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement,
Regulatory Impact Review, and
Regulatory Flexibility Analysis

Prepared by the New England Fishery Management Council
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In consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service
and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council



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About the cover: Cover photo shows scallop catch of a single dredge from the Nantucket Lightship Area during August 2001. The photo was taken immediately after the catch was dumped on deck, before the crew picked large scallops out or finfish were discarded.

Cover Sheet

Abstract

Amendment 10 to the Scallop Fishery Management Plan has been in development for approximately four years. The goals of the amendment are to improve the FMP's ability to meet its objectives and achieve optimum yield, to update the analysis of cumulative impacts of the FMP on the human environment, and to re-evaluate the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) components of the FMP and minimize adverse effects on EFH.

To achieve the goals, the amendment introduces a formal adaptive rotation area management strategy supported by cooperative industry surveys and implemented by framework adjustments to close and re-open scallop areas. It also sets forth a procedure for allocating area-specific days-at-sea and trips, that when coupled with a day-at-sea tradeoff, larger rings and twine top mesh, and crew limits is expected to reduce fishing time, having positive effects on bycatch species and essential fish habitat. Habitat impacts are further addressed by designating a portion of the scallop fishing grounds as a habitat closure, areas that have been closed to scallop fishing since 1995 and will therefore see continuing habitat recovery.

As shown in the analyses presented in this document, the management measures included in Amendment 10 will improve yield from the scallop resource through area rotation and will reduce the adverse effects of the scallop fishery on the environment, including the physical environment and other living resources.

The Council completed the Draft Amendment and Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement in April 2003, conducted public hearings in May 2003, accepted and evaluated extensive public comments during a 90-day comment period, and selected final alternatives in August and September 2003, based on public comment and scientific advice.

The Final SEIS and its supporting documentation will be available to the public for a 30-day comment period following a notice published in the Federal Register. Additional comments will be due to the National Marine Fisheries Service on the date provided in the Notice of Availability and proposed rule to be published in the Federal Register.

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